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State defends Israel on its help in spy case

By Bill Gertz
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The State Department yesterday defended Israel against charges that Israeli officials did not fully cooperate with the Justice Department's espionage investigation of Jonathan Jay Pollard.

"Israel has cooperated with the terms of its arrangement with the Department of Justice," said State Department spokesman Bernard Kalb.

He dismissed, as not representative of Reagan administration views, recent statements by unnamed U.S. government officials about widespread Israeli spying in the United States and Israel's lack of candor with U.S. investigators.

"The U.S. has no evidence of any espionage ring involving Israeli offi-

cials other than the ones described in the indictment of the Pollards," Mr. Kalb said. "We also wish to note that the indictment and successful prosecution was made possible through the cooperation of the government of Israel."

He said the statement "reflects the view of all elements of the administration."

Justice officials say the espionage investigation is ongoing and could lead to indictments of Israeli officials. Pollard has been cooperating with the Justice Department in the probe.

"It's not going to go away," one official said.

FBI Director William Webster said in a recent newspaper interview that the Israelis provided "selective cooperation" in the Pollard investigation, but he declined to comment

when asked if the espionage operation was a deviation from official Israeli intelligence-gathering operations.

A spokesman for Mr. Webster said yesterday the FBI director "stands by" his remarks.

Pollard, a former civilian Naval Investigative Service counterintelligence analyst, pleaded guilty June 4 to spying for Israel. Pollard's wife, Anne Henderson-Pollard, pleaded guilty to lesser charges in the case and four Israeli officials were named as unindicted co-conspirators.

Mr. Kalb said the U.S. officials are "deeply concerned" about the Pollard case and praised the Israeli government statement Sunday pledging continued cooperation in the probe.

"The United States welcomes and accepts this statement and Israel's renewed pledge of cooperation with

the investigation of the remaining issues in the Pollard case," Mr. Kalb said. "We expect such cooperation in view of the close relations between our two countries and we look forward to receiving this until the case is closed."

Israeli officials have said U.S. investigators did not question an Israeli Air Force officer described in court papers as Mr. Pollard's "handler" during a trip to Israel last December and this may have lead U.S. officials to conclude the Israelis were less than forthcoming about the embarrassing espionage episode.

An Israeli Cabinet statement denounced what was described as "a wave of unfounded pronouncements" about the Pollard affair and said the operation was not authorized by the government.